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Monday, March 20, 2017 metro.us | t: MetroNewYork | f: MetroNewYork

BEYONCE ISN'T THE ONLY ONE ON THIS TREND

Moms-to-be strike a pose to celebrate pregnancy. 24-25

Love guru to speak at UN. 8

Exhibit lets you take a peek inside mummies. 26

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GRIDIRON GANJA

Could legalizing marijuana save the NFL? 30

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK & BILLY BECERRA

BALANCED BUDGET PLAN OFFERED BY MID-MAY

A detailed version of President Trump's budget will lay out plans to eventually erase U.S. deficits, White House budget director Mick Mulvaney said. "We're getting into that now. By May, I think it's mid-May we're shooting for right now, we'll have that larger budget." Mulvaney said on "Meet the Press." He acknowledged that the budget would not be balanced in the upcoming 2018 fiscal year but said the administration wants to put the country on a path toward eventually wiping out annual deficits. "We won't be able to balance the budget this year, but we're working on trying to get it to balance within the 10-year budget window, which is what Republicans in the House and the Senate have traditionally done in the last couple of years," Mulvaney said. REUTERS

NO PROOF OF CLAIMS TRUMP TOWER BUGGED

2 U.S. lawmakers from both parties said they had seen no proof to support the claim by Republican President Donald Trump that his predecessor Barack Obama had wiretapped him last year, adding pressure on Trump to explain or back off his repeated assertion. Several Republicans last week urged Trump to apologize for the allegations he made in a series of tweets. The maelstrom also caused tension with key U.S. allies and threatens to distract Republicans from campaign promises on health care and taxes. "I don't know the basis for President Trump's assertion," U.S. Sen. Susan Collins, a Republican, said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "I do believe he owes us that explanation." Collins said she supported Trump as president, but she wouldn't side with him if he "misstated what the facts are." REUTERS

INCIDENT AT WHITE HOUSE CHECKPOINT

3 One person was in custody after a suspicious vehicle drove up to a White House checkpoint on Saturday night, the Secret Service said, after CNN reported that the driver claimed to have a bomb. CNN, citing two law enforcement sources, said there was no confirmation of any device in the vehicle but that security at the White House had been upgraded. The Secret Service said an unidentified driver was taken into custody after a suspicious vehicle approached a checkpoint, but made no mention of any claims of an explosive device. Several streets around the White House were closed. REUTERS

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

PROTEST SELFIE

5 A woman takes a selfie with security forces as Lebanese people gather at Riad Al Solh Square to protest the corruption and the government's new tax plans in Beirut, Lebanon, on Sunday. GETTY IMAGES

COLORADO WILDFIRE, AT LEAST 1K EVACUATED

4 A wildfire near the University of Colorado in Boulder burned through about 62 acres of woodland on Sunday, prompting authorities to urge at least 1,000 people to evacuate the drought-hit region. The fire in Sunshine Canyon, just outside the university town, started before dawn on Sunday and is about 20 percent contained, with no injuries or damage to structures reported, said Denise White, a spokeswoman for the Boulder Emergency Operations Center. Authorities have contacted 1,000 people and told them to leave the area, she said. The number could cover individual households or multiple people in a single home. "From what we've got right now, a lot of the fire is in open space," she said. "We do have some evacuations in place." REUTERS

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AMANDA MIKELBERG, REPORTER

Did you remember that song "I Would Walk 500 Miles" by The Proclaimers, and do you remember thinking, "How much of a nut in love does someone have to be to do that?" What if it was 5,000 miles — in desert climates? Happiness guru and United Nations honoree PK Mahanandia tells Metro of how he biked from India to Sweden to fulfill a prophecy of escaping a lowly existence through love. **metro.us**

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Jimmy Breslin, hard-boiled New York columnist, dies at 88

Breslin won the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for commentary for "columns which consistently champion ordinary citizens."

Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper columnist Jimmy Breslin, a self-described "street reporter" who chronicled New York City life for decades and won acclaim for his coverage of the "Son of Sam" serial killings, died on Sunday morning at age 88.

Breslin died at his home on Manhattan's West Side, said Michael Daly, a friend and a columnist at the New York Daily News, one of several newspapers where Breslin worked in his decades-long career.

He had been ill with pneumonia, Daly said after speaking with the family.

"He died of reaching the finish line," Daly said.

Breslin was believed to be 86 at the time of his death, but the columnist's family and doctor checked his birth certificate after his death and it showed him to be 88, the Daily News reported.

Breslin was a hard-boiled newspaperman born in the New York City borough of Queens. The Irish-American in a rumpled suit with unkempt hair, a drink in his hand and a cigar between his lips held court in many New York City journalists' haunts.

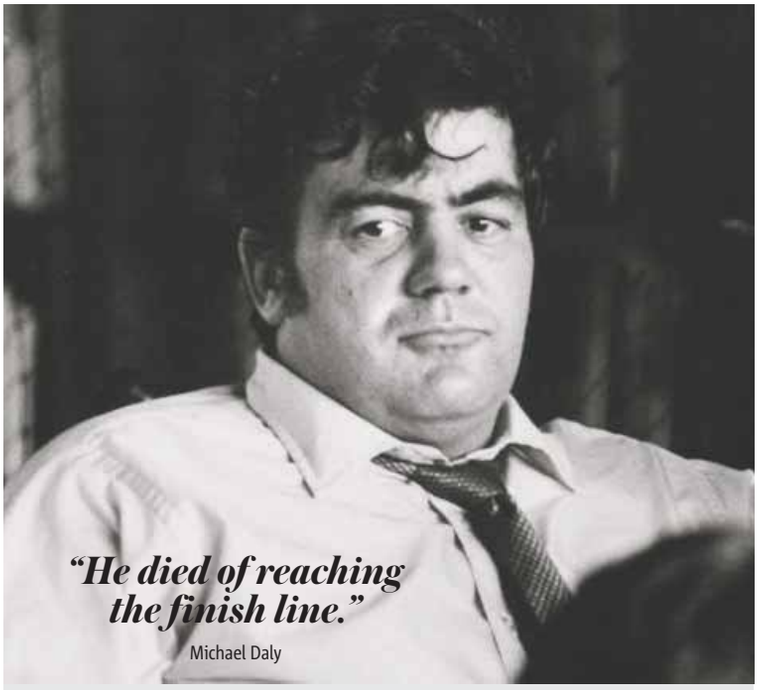
He had a sharp eye for detail, a keen ear for dialogue and was plugged into sources ranging from the criminal underworld to the corner newsstand.

A deli counter man in Staten Island did not need a dictionary to read a Breslin column. He told his stories in an abrupt, straightforward style that New York magazine once described as "equal parts Dickens and Yogi Berra."

His writing also had a good bit of Damon Runyon, the legendary Prohibition-era New York newspaperman and the subject of a biography by Breslin.

Breslin said his columns were fueled by a fear of missing a deadline and a rage that he said all columnists needed if they were to be advocates for their readers.

In addition to taking on authority, Breslin wrote about underdogs, small-timers and victims. Sometimes he was a victim himself, such as in 1991 while on his way through a racially tense Brooklyn neighborhood to cover a speech. His taxi was surrounded by a mob of black youths shouting "White man! White man!" who stole his cash and credit cards and left him standing in his underwear.



Jimmy Breslin dies at 86. BOB PETERSON/GETTY IMAGES

Buffett or a killer?

When Breslin won the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, he was cited for "columns which consistently champion ordinary citizens."

"I can barely handle legitimate people," Breslin wrote in his nonfiction book "The Good Rat." "They all proclaim immaculate honesty but each day they commit the most serious of all felonies, being a bore. To whom do you care to listen — Warren Buffett, the second-richest and single most boring person on earth, or Burt Kaplan out of Bensonhurst, Brooklyn?"

Breslin's preference was Kaplan, the central figure in "The Good Rat," who was a prolific mob hit man who testified against two New York City policemen accused of committing murders for the Mafia.

In a 2013 interview with CNN, Breslin summed up his reporting technique this way: "Keep your mouth shut and your eyes open and keep moving."

Breslin had a knack for finding angles that other reporters did not see. He did it most notably after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, focusing on the Arlington National Cemetery employee who dug Kennedy's grave, while the rest of the journalistic pack followed the president's funeral procession.

Breslin grew up in working-class Queens with his sister and a mother who supported them as a teacher and welfare department worker after their father, who Breslin described as an alcoholic barroom piano player, abandoned them. REUTERS

For more about Breslin's life, visit **metro.us**

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Jimmy Breslin won the Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 1986, the year this photo was taken. GETTY IMAGES

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TRUMP'S AMERICA

THE MAN WHO COULDA TAMED DONALD

ELLIS HENICAN

Opinion

Ellis Henican is a seasoned observer of the nation's political and social landscape. He has appeared as a commentator on CNN, MSNBC and Fox News. He is a former columnist at Newsday. Follow him @henican

Breslin's gone.

Beautiful.

Now he and McAlary can hate each other again.

It wasn't only the swagger or the feuds with fellow columnists. It wasn't only the short, punchy paragraphs. It was the climb-the-stairs reporting and the unapologetic point of view that set Jimmy Breslin apart and proves once and for all how much we need more people like him as Donald Trump keeps running circles around the media.

How would Breslin at his prime have reacted to an orange-faced, know-nothing, huckster-president who got rich slapping his name on shiny buildings? JB wouldn't have only quoted some CBO report, I promise you that. With fury and efficiency, he'd have thrown nouns and verbs like fists — and left real bruises.

How many of today's TV pundits can really claim that?

For his part, Trump just keeps copying Breslin. Aren't "Lyin' Ted," "Low Energy Jeb" and the "Failing New York Times" the direct descendants of "Society Carey"? A shot in the face is always more effective than another statistic or a drawn-out analysis. Queens boys understood that.

Breslin didn't invent the street newspaper column, and it wasn't a captive of New York. Chicago had Royko. Boston had Carr and Barnicle. Philly had Stone and Dexter even before Lopez passed through. But all of them — all of us — learned from, stole from and measured ourselves against Breslin, and he was seldom gracious about it.

Hamill was nicer. Kempton thought harder. You'll notice some lingering reserve in this morning's fawning obituaries, pieces Jimmy never would have written about himself. But 88 years, thousands of columns, a dozen books are a pretty good run for a guy whose primary professional goal strove "to please one reader, me."

Those of us who came after him all have Breslin stories to tell. The memory that lingers this morning came from my kid-reporter days. I got the story that Jimmy wanted on Queens Boulevard.

"You tryin' to pick my pocket?" he snarled on the sidewalk outside the Pastrami King. "That was somethin'."

I think that might have been the last nice thing he ever said to me. I took it to mean that I'd arrived in the city.

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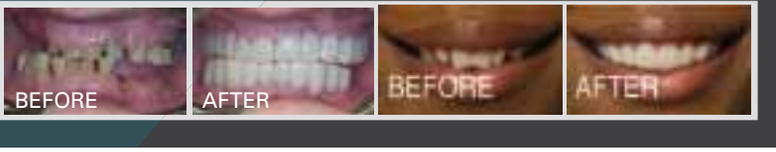

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Happiness guru to America: Politics divide, love conquers

PK Mahanandia, the subject of the book "The Amazing Story of the Man Who Cycled from India to Europe for Love" written by Per J. Andersson, tells Metro of his journey from suffering to joy.

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PK Mahanandia and his wife Lotta. Inset: PK Mahanandia.
ALL IMAGES COURTESY PK MAHANANDIA

PK Mahanandia will speak at the United Nations Monday, and afterward appear at a book signing with the author at 1 p.m. at the UN Bookshop, General Assembly building Concourse level, entrance at First Avenue and 46th Street.

Why did the UN invite you to speak on March 20?
It is International Happiness Day. Maybe people aren't very happy these days. They need some help. I haven't prepared anything, but I will talk about what is happiness. We have to create happiness within us, because it's not outside of us. We have to find love and give love. After I met my wife, I became the happiest man on the planet. But love isn't always about another person. Sometimes you love something — sometimes it's writing poems or singing songs. I come to New York now to give that message.

Why were you unhappy before you met your wife?
I was born in the jungle where the book was written. There were elephants and tigers and it was a jungle written about by Rudyard Kipling. But I was born in the caste system, and I am the lowest rank in India, an "untouchable." I was below dogs and cows. I didn't like school because it was organized to bully my caste. I had lots of trauma — I was the only one at the school who was untouchable. I didn't sit inside the classroom. I had to sit outside the window. I was very sad and had suicidal feelings.

How were you able to overcome the pain of being an untouchable?
One day a school inspector from London came to visit and his wife came with him. She was a beautiful white, white-haired woman, must have been 70. She gave me flowers. And she touched me — nobody had ever touched me. And she said "I am like you, I am an outcast. I am untouchable too.' I was paralyzed but overjoyed. She gave me garments and I went home and my mother said where did you get those clothes? I was a little boy. I was about 7 years old. I said, "Mother, I am in love. A woman gave me these clothes."

How did you find love?
My wife drove from Sweden in a car. She just got her license. India was a popular place for hippies to come for a spiritual and love experience. I was making sketches in the city square. She had me draw her three portraits in three days and she paid me double, 20 rupees each time. She had long blond hair, she was so beautiful, like an angel. One evening, I remember it, Dec. 17, 1975, I was drawing her. I felt weightlessness. I told her: "It was decided in heaven that we were going to meet. I can't change it, you are going to be my wife." She was shocked. But she followed me. I took her to meet my family, in the jungle. There was a festival and people were dancing, people were throwing rice and flowers. She was given a handmade sari — and we got married.

Then she went back to Sweden. One and a half years passed. We were writing each other constantly. And then when I finished my study at art school, and when my longing became too much, I sold everything and bought a bicycle.

For more about the happiness guru, visit metro.us

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‘Fearless Girl’ statue supporters call on NYC to make it permanent

Online petitions and local elected officials want the 50-inch bronze statue to keep staring down the charging bull.

ALEXI FRIEDMAN
@MetroNewYork
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There is a movement afoot to make permanent a bronze statue of a little girl staring down a bronze statue of a very large charging bull in the Financial District.

It has come in the form of two online petitions and a separate push by local elected officials.

The 50-inch “Fearless Girl,” which now has its own Twitter page and hashtag, was installed on March 7, to coincide with International Women’s Day. It was commissioned by asset management company State Street Global Advisors in an effort to address the need for more women on corporate boards.

The statue has become a popular attraction, standing a few feet from the famous three-ton bronze charging bull, which is a long-standing tourist attraction on Broadway, just north of Battery Place.

On Saturday, Assemblywoman Yuh-Line Niou held a rally next to Fearless Girl to make the temporary statue a permanent fixture. The assemblywoman has the support of 50 female elected officials, local and throughout the state, Patch.com reported.

New York City Public Advocate Letitia James has also called on the city to keep Fearless Girl at that location.

A Change.org petition to make the statue permanent has attracted more than 23,000 signatures as of Sunday afternoon. “Sign the petition to encourage the City of New York and State Street to make the Fearless Girl a permanent installation, facing down that charging bull,” the petition stated.

Separately, a Care2 online petition has attracted more than 26,000 signatures, also seeking to give Fearless Girl permanent residency. “Women’s equality is not a temporary issue,” according to a release publicizing the Care2 petition.

The “Fearless Girl” statue has become a popular attraction in lower Manhattan. GETTY IMAGES

The bronze statue, created by artist Kristen Visbal, was supposed to remain at the site for only a week, but got the attention of Mayor Bill de Blasio, who has said it will remain there until April 2. A spokeswoman for the mayor told the New York Daily News there were no plans to extend the permit.

But Fearless Girl has not been popular with everyone. In a column in The New York Times titled, “The False Feminism of Fearless Girl,”Ginia Bellafante called the statue “an exercise in corporate imaging” commissioned by a company that has just five women among its 28-person corporate leadership team.

“The point is not that working to expand the presence of women on corporate boards is in itself an unworthy goal,” Bellafonte wrote. “It is that building a bronze monument to the plight of the more than 14 million women who make up two-thirds of the low-wage work force would also be worthy. Would anyone Instagram it?”

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Two Advanced Medical Treatments Every Knee Arthritis Sufferer

By *NY Pain MD*

***NY Pain MD* is a medical clinic with locations in Midtown NYC and Uptown NYC that has treated thousands of knee arthritis and joint pain patients.**

Here is what every knee arthritis sufferer should know about the best treatments and options available today. Including when and why you should consider each of these 2 treatment approaches to get maximum results.

If you suffer with knee or other join arthritis pain, you have probably already tried many treatments ... especially countless pain medications. Experienced doctors understand that, even though pain medications such as anti-inflammatory pain pills are part of the recommended early treatment plan for knee arthritis pain... they are rarely the answer over the longer term.

In most cases they have minimal results (if any) and have a laundry list of potential side effects. Some being serious and even life threatening.

Are There Any Better Options?

Thankfully, advancements in science and technology come extremely fast. And now there are two very good options for knee arthritis to help relieve the pain.

Two options that a lot of knee arthritis sufferers have never heard of.

Before we get into the two treatments, please understand this...

NY Pain MD is a well established medical clinic that has treated thousands of knee arthritis sufferers and joint and back pain sufferers. Patients travel from all over the area and even several states away from NYC to be treated at one of their clinics because they want the best medical treatments available. What you are about to discover are two REAL medical treatments. Not miracle cures you see on infomercials or non-medical treatments promoted on the internet.

Know this fact: There is no cure for arthritis. But there are these two treatments that have already helped thousands of knee arthritis sufferers - possibly just like you.

The first treatment is more common than the second. Even if you have heard of this treatment - or even tried it without good results - please read this. You will find out why it may not have worked for you and how you may be able to get much better results.

#1 Viscosupplementation

Viscosupplementation has gained quite a bit of popularity in recent years and it has gotten mixed results for a couple of reasons.

But before we get into that,here's what you need to know about viscosupplementation.

When you have arthritis, you suffer a decrease in the lubrication fluids in your knees.

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The lubricating fluid that decreases is called "synovial fluid." pharmaceutical companies (with the help of doctors) can now make ***natural*** synovial fluid gel-like compounds that, during viscosupplementation treatments. Doctors can precisely introduce directly into the knee and other joints.

This helps replace the lubricating fluid to the knee joint - allowing it to move more freely and smoothly and often decreasing or even eliminating the pain.

What Results Can Be Expected?

Like all medical treatments, the results vary and can not be predicted. But many knee arthritis sufferers get dramatic results. It is not uncommon for patients to either postpone knee replacement surgery for years... or even permanently cancel it.

But There Is A BIG Problem

The key is the treatment must be EXTREMELY PRECISE. If the procedure is slightly off, the medication will not get into the knee joint and the treatment will not work.

That's why the experts at ***NY Pain MD*** use Precision Arthritis Targeting Technology so they can actually see the lubricant going directly into the knee joint during the treatment.

Research shows that doctors performing joint injections without this technology can miss the joint as much as 30% of the time.

If you have tried viscosupplementation without this imaging technology without good results - this may be why.

That's why ***NY Pain MD*** takes it even one step further. They do not just use one step process of advanced imaging during treatment - they use two in their "double confirmation" process. This is to ensure patients get the best possible results.

Another Important Factor

Viscosupplementation medications also come in several different "brands" and chemical make-ups. Just like all medications, some people respond better to one than another. So, the experts at ***NY Pain MD*** use several and great effort is taken to figure out what is the best one for YOU.

One last thing: The experts at ***NY Pain MD*** have found that earlier you start Viscosupplementation the better.

This is most likely because the longer you wait - the more joint destruction takes place.

That's why ***NY Pain MD*** is now seeing so many patients as young as 35 to 40.

Summary: If you have knee arthritis pain and have not tried. Viscosupplementation you should look into it as soon as possible.

If you have tried it without good results. you may still be able to get great results with the proper imaging and specific medication.

What Should You Do If Viscosupplementation Fails?

When conservative treatment, including viscosupplementation fails ... most knee arthritis sufferers believe their only option is total knee replacement surgery.

This is not true...and here is why

There is another treatment for serious knee arthritis pain most people (and even doctors) do not know about.

#2: Radiofrequency Treatment

This treatment is technically called, "Radiofrequency Neurotomy." Or RF for short.

RF is a procedure that is based the theory that blocking the nerve supply to the painful area may alleviate pain and restore function.

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Needs To Know - Before Or After Knee Replacement Surgery

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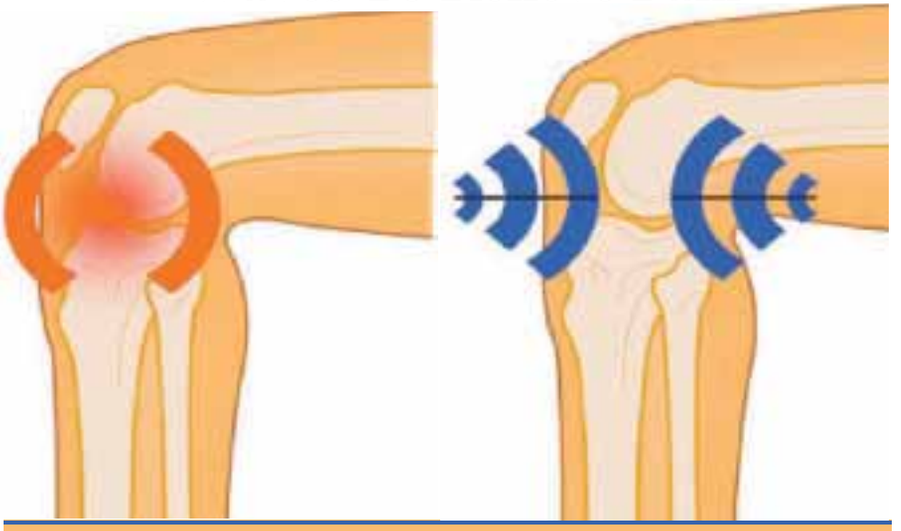

Science rescues knee arthritis sufferers?: **Radio Frequency Waves are used to block the nerve supply to the painful area and may alleviate pain and restore function to many. Many patients still in pain after a knee replacement may respond very well to these treatments allowing the possibility of avoiding additional surgery.**

Several branches of nerves that surround the knee are known as "genicular nerves."

Radiofrequency waves are delivered to the genicular nerves under advanced imaging to "block" the nerve from transmitting pain signals.

There are two distinct parts to this treatment. First, a test, diagnostic "G Block" procedure is done to determine if the procedure is going to decrease pain and improve function.

If this first "test" procedure is successful, then one to two weeks later, Radio Frequency waves are applied for term relief.

Is It Safe?

Research has shown this to provided significant relief for some patients. to procedure to be safe and effective.

One study published November 4, 2010 in the journal Pain found that RF treated subjects on average "achieved at least 50% knee pain relief at 1,4 and 12 weeks, respectively. No patient reported a post procedure adverse event during the follow-up period.

Some studies indiciate some patients may get years of relief in some cases. "RF neurotomy (radio frequency treatment) of genicular nerves leads to significant pain reduction and functional improvement in a subset of elderly chronic knee osteoarthritis pain, and thus may be an effective treatment in such cases."

It should also be mentioned that, like all procedures, results will vary patient to patient

Who Should Try This Treatment?

RF should be considered after other treatments, such as anti-inflammatory pain medication and viscosupplementation do not offer good enough results.

RF can be utilized before resorting to total knee replacement. RF allows many patients to avoid knee replacement surgery.

RF has also been found effective AFTER knee replacement surgery when the patient still feels pain.

The pain after a failed knee replacement surgery can be debilitating and this procedure can be the only thing that helps and give you relief.

What To Do Next If You Are In Pain

Here is the "X" factor many do not consider that might be the difference between you getting the best possible treatment or not.

Many experts suggest choosing a medical clinic that offers all these treatments and has the proper, most advanced technology all under one roof.

This way, the doctors working on your case can give you a proper examination and advise the best possible treatment plan for your individual case.

Several experts work as a team to offer you the best treatment options at the appropriate time to maximize results. It is also very convenient to have all your doctors and treatments in one place. Traveling to different offices can be time consuming and even more expensive.

NY Pain MD believes this "X" factor is one of the reasons so many knee arthritis sufferers travel from all over to be treated at their advanced medical clinics.

NY Pain MD offers a limited number of complimentary knee arthritis treatment screenings every month. These screenings are a way for knee arthritis sufferers to get some of their ques-tions answered and see if they are a candidate for one of the cutting-edge treatments offered at ***NY Pain MD***

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Meals on Wheels sees surge in donations after Trump unveils proposed budget

One in six seniors "struggles with hunger," according to the organization.

Meals on Wheels America, the umbrella organization for 5,000 providers of home-delivered meals for seniors, said on Saturday that online donations have surged since the White House released a proposed budget that could lead to a big drop in its funding.

The organization, which provides advocacy services for the national network, received about $50,000 on Thursday after the budget blueprint was announced, compared with $1,000 on a typical day.

President Donald Trump's first budget proposal includes a 17.9 percent cut for fiscal 2018 in funds for the Department of Health and Human Services, which provides most of the government support for Meals on Wheels, the organization said.

The budget proposal did not say how the cut would affect the Administration for Community Living, the HHS agency that funds nutrition programs for the elderly, Meals on Wheels spokeswoman Jenny Bertolette said.

Meals on Wheels said on its website that it is difficult to imagine a scenario under which the next federal budget would not have an impact on its services.

"While Meals on Wheels America and local Meals on Wheels programs are seeing an uptick in giving, it does not replace federal funding," Bertolette told Reuters in an email.

The White House referred questions about the HHS budget to the department.

Research shows seniors' health improves with fresh delivered meals, as opposed to frozen ones. MELISSA FARES

An HHS representative referred to a statement from Secretary Tom Price released earlier this week. "HHS is dedicated to fulfilling our department's mission to improve the health and well-being of the American people. This budget supports that mission and will help ensure we are delivering critical services to our fellow citizens," the statement said.

Trump's budget proposal calls for a sharp increase in military spending and a like reduction in most discretionary nondefense programs, prompting a wave of concern from Democrats and some of the president's fellow Republicans.

Bertolette said the national Meals on Wheels association did not know whether its local members have seen a similar jump in donations.

One in six seniors "struggles with hunger," according to the organization, which provides its services free of charge for those who cannot afford to pay.

Seniors who have fresh meals delivered daily show greater improvement in health and well-being than those who get frozen meals delivered once a week or no meals at all, the organization said, citing research from Brown University and funded by AARP Inc.

According to the website, Meals on Wheels America hosts a resource center on nutrition with the help of federal funding. REUTERS

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POLITICS

U.S. Homeland Security seeks proposals for wall with Mexico
The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has issued requests for proposals for prototypes for a wall along the Mexican border, saying ideally it should be 30 feet high and the wall facing the U.S. side should be "aesthetically pleasing in color."

A wall to stem illegal immigration was one of Donald Trump's main campaign promises and has been highly controversial. The president has vowed to make Mexico reimburse the United States for its cost but Mexico has repeatedly said it will not do so.

Earlier this week, the White House requested $3 billion more for Homeland Security, with some of that intended for planning and building the border wall.

According to one document posted online by U.S. Customs and Border Protection Friday night, the wall should be 30 feet high, built using concrete, and "physically imposing." However, it says designs over 18 feet high could be acceptable.

"Designs with heights of less than 18 feet are not acceptable," the document said. It said the wall should have features that do not allow people to climb over it and should prevent digging below the wall.

"The wall shall prevent/deter for a minimum of 1 hour the creation of a physical breach of the wall (e.g., punching through the wall) larger than 12 inches in diameter or square using sledgehammer, car jack, pickaxe, chisel, battery-operated impact tools, battery-operated cutting tools, oxy/acetylene torch or other similar hand-held tools," it said.

The other document requesting proposals has many of the same requirements but it does not specify that it be solid concrete. REUTERS

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TWEET-NADO

TOM FOREMAN
Opinion

If the White House has a storm cellar, the staff might want to crawl in and lock the door. President Donald Trump's tendency to tweet at will has finally stirred a controversy which is not just blowing away. That leads my three things to watch this week in politics.

1. COMEY IS COMING
Congress has called FBI Director James Comey to the center of the storm again this week to face a question: Seriously, is there any evidence at all that President Obama "wiretapped" Trump Tower? The Capitol Hill gang has largely made it clear they think the claim is ludicrous, and the White House has so far provided zero evidence it is true. But don't miss hearing Comey's take. Everyone will be talking about it, and about his answer to another question too: Does he know of any collusion between the Trump Campaign and the Russians? Hang on kids, it's a twister!

2. NOT SO HEALTHY
The new health care legislation may be spinning out of control and the big vote is coming up Thursday. The repeal and replace plan for Obamacare hasthe White House fully behind it, and the president had hoped to fast track this mammoth piece of legislation. But now it is dangerously close to being torn to shreds. Moderate GOPers fear it is too stingy. Right-wingers are furious it is too generous. And Dems just hate it in general. Keep watching the pre-vote vote counts. If the numbers tilt hard against Team Trump (and that looks like a real possibility) the new president and his pals will need more than Band-Aids and aspirin to recover.

3. TRAVEL BAN BAN
Getting things done as President is not always easy, but it's even harder when you must do the same things over and over and over again. That's how it is going with the proposed travel ban for some majority-Muslim nations. Already slapped down twice by the courts, White Housers now say they will keep pushing to make it happen … but win or lose, they are burning a lot of political energy.

ILLUSTRATION BY BILLY BECERRA, METRO

POLITICS

Tillerson ends China trip with warm words from President Xi
With warm words from Chinese President Xi Jinping on Sunday, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson ended his first trip to Asia since taking office with an agreement to work together with China on North Korea and putting aside trickier issues.

China has been irritated at being told by Washington to rein in North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and the U.S. decision to base an advanced missile defense system in South Korea.

Beijing is also deeply suspicious of U.S. intentions toward self-ruled Taiwan, which China claims as its own. REUTERS

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Paris airport shooting reignites security debate before French election

More than 230 people have died in France in the past two years at the hands of attackers allied to Islamic State, making security a key issue in the two-round presidential election on April 23 and May 7.

Police questioned and then released relatives of a man shot dead at a Paris airport, as investigators sought clues about why he attacked an army patrol in an incident that has pushed security to the forefront of France's election campaign.

Paris prosecutor Francois Molins said late on Saturday that the man, named as 39-year-old Ziyed Ben Belgacem, had shouted he was there to "die for Allah" when he tried to seize a gun from a woman air force member on patrol at Orly airport.

After throwing down a bag containing a can of petrol and putting an air pistol to the head of the soldier, he was shot three times by her colleagues.

Emmanuel Macron, the centrist front-runner, told France 2 television on Sunday it was "essential" to maintain the current state of emergency, in force since November 2015. He reiterated that he would strengthen military operations and intelligence against Islamist militants.

Conservative Francois Fillon said France was in a "situation of virtual civil war" and spoke out against the idea of lifting the emergency, as floated by the justice minister last week.

Far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, running on an anti-immigration, anti-European Union ticket, told a rally that the government was "overwhelmed, stunned, paralyzed like a rabbit in the headlights."

Belgacem, who had been in and out of prison for theft and drug offences according to judicial sources, was already on the authorities' radar. They said he became a radicalized Muslim when he served a prison term several years ago for drug-trafficking.

He had been reporting regularly to police under the terms of a provisional release from custody, and did not have the right to leave the country.

Several hours before he was killed, Belgacem had shot and wounded a police officer with his air pistol after being stopped for a routine traffic check north of Paris, officials said. He then fled the scene.

He later entered a bar where he was a regular customer in Vitry-sur-Seine on the other side of Paris, and opened fire with his air gun without hitting anyone. He also stole a car before arriving at the airport.

Belgacem's father, who was initially detained by police but released late on Saturday, denied his son had been involved in terrorism.

"My son has never been a terrorist. He has never prayed: he drinks. And, under the influence of alcohol and cannabis, this is what happens," the father, whose name was not given, told broadcaster Europe 1.

He said he had received a phone call from his son in which Belgacem referred to shooting the police officer, saying: "I ask your forgiveness. I screwed up with a policeman." REUTERS

A French policeman secures the area at Paris' Orly airport. GETTY IMAGES

Germany rejects Trump's claim it owes NATO, US 'vast sums' for defense

German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen on Sunday rejected President Donald Trump's claim that Germany owes NATO and the United States "vast sums" of money for defense.

"There is no debt account at NATO," von der Leyen said in a statement, adding that it was wrong to link the alliance's target for members to spend 2 percent of their economic output on defense by 2024 solely to NATO.

"Defense spending also goes into UN peacekeeping missions, into our European missions and into our contribution to the fight against IS terrorism," von der Leyen said.

She said everyone wanted the burden to be shared fairly and for that to happen it was necessary to have a "modern security concept" that included a modern NATO but also a European defense union and investment in the United Nations.

Trump said on Twitter on Saturday — a day after meeting German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Washington — that Germany "owes vast sums of money to NATO & the United States must be paid more for the powerful, and very expensive, defense it provides to Germany!"

Trump has urged Germany and other NATO members to accelerate efforts to meet NATO's defense spending target.

German defense spending is set to rise by 1.4 billion euros to 38.5 billion euros in 2018 — a figure that is projected to represent 1.26 percent of economic output, Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble has said.

In 2016, Germany's defense spending ratio stood at 1.18 percent.

During her trip to Washington, Merkel reiterated Germany's commitment to the 2 percent military spending goal. REUTERS

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Immigration judges headed to 12 US cities to speed deportations

The plan to intensify deportations is in line with a vow made frequently by President Trump on the campaign trail to deport more illegal immigrants involved in crime.

The U.S. Justice Department is developing plans to temporarily reassign immigration judges from around the country to 12 cities to speed up deportations of illegal immigrants who have been charged with crimes, according to two administration officials.

How many judges will be reassigned and when they will be sent is still under review, according to the officials, but the Justice Department has begun soliciting volunteers for deployment.

The targeted cities are New York; Los Angeles; Miami; New Orleans; San Francisco; Baltimore, Bloomington, Minnesota; El Paso, Texas; Harlingen, Texas; Imperial, California; Omaha, Nebraska and Phoenix, Arizona. They were chosen because they are cities which have high populations of illegal immigrants with criminal charges, the officials said.

A spokeswoman for the Justice Department's Executive Office of Immigration Review, which administers immigration courts, confirmed that the cities have been identified as likely recipients of reassigned immigration judges, but did not elaborate on the planning.

The Department of Homeland Security asked for the judges' reshuffle, an unusual move given that immigration courts are administered by the Department of Justice.

As part of the Trump administration crackdown on illegal immigrants, the Justice Department is also sending immigration judges to detention centers along the southwest border. Those redeployments will begin Monday. GETTY IMAGES

A Homeland Security spokeswoman declined to comment on any plan that has not yet been finalized.

Under an executive order signed by Trump in January, illegal immigrants with pending criminal cases are regarded as priorities for deportation whether they have been found guilty or not.

That is a departure from former President Barack Obama's policy, which prioritized deportations only of those convicted of serious crimes.

The policy shift has been criticized by advocate groups who say it unfairly targets immigrants who might ultimately be acquitted and do not pose a threat.

The cities slated to receive more judges have more than half of the 18,013 pending immigration cases that involve undocumented immigrants facing or convicted of criminal charges, according to data provided by the Justice Department's Executive Office of Immigration Review.

More than 200 of those cases involve immigrants currently incarcerated, meaning that the others have either not been convicted or have served their sentence. The Justice Department did not provide a breakdown of how many of the remainder have been convicted and how many are awaiting trial. REUTERS

POLITICS

Supreme Court's ideological balance at stake in confirmation fight

When President Donald Trump's U.S. Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch is sworn in for his Senate confirmation hearing on Monday, Democrats will make the case that he is a pro-business, social conservative insufficiently independent of the president.

In a bid to place hurdles in the way of Gorsuch's expected confirmation by the Republican-controlled Senate, Democrats on the judiciary committee have said they will probe him on several fronts based mainly on his record as a federal appeals court judge and a Justice Department appointee under former President George W. Bush.

Gorsuch has served on the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals since 2006. He would replace conservative Justice Antonin Scalia, who died in February 2016. If confirmed by the Senate, Gorsuch would restore a narrow 5-4 conservative majority on the court.

Among questions he will face will be whether he is sufficiently independent from Trump, who has criticized judges for ruling against his bid to restrict travel from Muslim-majority countries. REUTERS

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Katy Perry kissed a girl and she not only liked it — it made her curious about her sexuality

During her acceptance speech for the National Equality Award at the Humans Rights Campaign Gala, the pop singer — who became famous for the song "I Kissed a Girl" — detailed her experience with conversion groups as a teenager.

"I speak my truths and I paint my fantasies into these bite-size pop songs," she said. "For instance, 'I kissed a girl and I liked it.' Truth be told, I did more than that."

She went on to say: "How was I supposed to reconcile that with a gospel-singing girl raised in youth groups that were pro-conversion camps? What I did know was I was curious, and even then, I knew sexuality wasn't … black and white."

Perry says she's glad to have started a conversation and that the world "seemed curious enough to sing along." I mean, we'll all sing along to something catchy enough, but sure.

J.Lo hangs with A-Rod's sister

The best way to prove that you're really into someone is to have other people post about your relationship on social media. Just ask Jennifer Lopez!

The singer and actress recently made a guest appearance on A-Rod's sister's Instagram. Suzy Dunand, a luxury realtor, went so far as to call her "cuñis," a Spanish slang word for sister-in-law.

This is moving fast, no?

J.Lo and A-Rod have reportedly been dating for months, and recently enjoyed some time together at an exclusive Bahamian resort.

Meanwhile, Drake is rapping about drunk texting Lopez, who apparently changed her number because she'd had enough of his tomfoolery. Sounds about right.

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Angelina Jolie shows emotion

Man, this divorce can't be finalized soon enough.

Brad Pitt is allegedly so very happy to see his children who've recently returned from a week-long trip to Cambodia and London. The trip reportedly made Angelina Jolie "sad." OK, girl.

This is the longest Pitt, 53, has been away from his children, and it's tearin' up his heart, just like the classic 'N Sync song.

Taking an extended trip without Pitt was hard for Jolie, 41. Probably just because traveling with a million kids is a nightmare, but presumably also because of emotions or whatever. According to Hollywood Life, a source said that Jolie was "struggling with overwhelming sadness" over taking her first trip with the children without the "Allied" actor.

All we can say is do not take any divorce tips from Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner.

Blac Chyna is in it for the 'long haul'

Blac Chyna is covering Cosmopolitan South Africa, and she needs you to know: She's just going through a rough patch right now with Rob Kardashian.

The 28-year-old opened up about her on-again, off-again relationship with the youngest Kardashian — and she says she's in it for the long haul. "I feel like every person who's in a long-term relationship goes through ups and downs. Everything isn't always going to be peaches and cream."

The two are reportedly "fighting for each other," despite living apart. And Scott Disick is promising everyone within earshot that Rob Kardashian, 30, is doing just fine.

OK, sure.

Why Blac Chyna is on the cover of Cosmopolitan in the first place is unclear. The maybe couple shares one daughter, Dream. They also share an unquenchable thirst for a C-list level of fame.

INSTAGRAM/@BLACCHYNA

Justin Long isn't happy 'Idiocracy' became relevant

The actor talks about the horror movie "Lavender" and an even scarier film he once made.

MATT PRIGGE
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The normally boyishly charming Justin Long has a new horror movie. It's called "Lavender," in which he has a small but key role as a doctor who tends to a woman (Abbie Cornish) who realizes she's blocked a traumatic memory involving mass murder, which she fears she may have committed. We can't say any more about it, so we found other things to chat about with Long, including an even scarier film he was once in: Mike Judge's 2006 "Idiocracy."

There are big spoilers about your character that we can't talk about. Admittedly, I had trouble coming up with questions about your role without ruining it for everyone.

Without any spoilers, I can say part of the appeal to playing him was that he was very guarded and kind of subdued. I wasn't able to show much and I had to keep a lot of things inside. I thought it would be an interesting acting challenge. It was fun to do — surprisingly. You would think playing a guarded character like that might be a little tedious to shoot, but it was fun. We all had to lift each others' spirits in between takes, because the subject was so heavy and dark.

I wanted to ask about another horror movie you were in "Idiocracy." I rewatched it the other week and it's a lot scarier now and maybe no longer so funny, since it's what America is becoming.

I saw it recently myself. It's getting more difficult to find the humor in that movie. It was such good satire. I don't know if Mike Judge realized how prophetic it would be. I'm sure he hoped it wouldn't be. We're not that far off from President Comacho [the wrestler/porn star-turned president, played by Terry Crews]. I was honored to be in it then, and I'm very happy to be a part of it now. It's just becoming a little bit less a comedy and more like a drama.

It's either the best movie to watch right now or the worst.

Sales of it rose during the election. At one point it was trending.

We can't say much about Justin Long's role as a doctor in "Lavender," now on VOD, without spoiling the big reveals. SAMUEL GOLDWYN COMPANY

GETTY

It's funny, because when it was released, Fox dumped it. They gave it the bare minimal contractual release. I don't think it came out in theaters in New York. *[Ed. It did not.]* I saw it in Austin, and even there it was called "Untitled Mike Judge Comedy." There were no posters. There was nothing behind it. My guess is that it was because it really goes after corporations. He attacks the power structure in America, which is corporate-based — more of an oligarchy. The interest in the studio didn't really align with what he was saying in that movie. Now, of course, it's so relevant.

I'm glad people are finally talking about it, even if it's too late.

If we promote it now, people will watch it, and maybe it will change the course of future elections. People will see the relevance of it and change their path.

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Why maternity photo shoots are all the rage

It's about embracing the female form.

KATE MOONEY
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First comes love, then (maybe) marriage, but before the baby in the baby carriage now there's another step: the maternity photoshoot.

Celebs, of course, have been at it awhile. You can trace the trend all the way back to Demi Moore's 1991 Vanity Fair Cover. Beyonce set the world on fire with her ethereal, fertility-goddess inspired shoot, and just last week, Ciara revealed her own baby bump in photos for Harper's Bazaar.

But now, thanks in part to these high-profile renderings, coupled with the aspirational exhibitionism of Instagram and Pinterest, everyday women are becoming bolder about embracing their pregnant form through seminude maternity photoshoots — and they aren't afraid to share the images with the world.

Tiffany Burke, a Seattle-based photographer, says her clients have come a long way. When she first started doing maternity shoots seven years ago, "It used to be, the woman and her husband would show up in matching black polos and jeans," she remembers.

Where before, "women weren't entirely sure what they wanted, they just wanted the moment captured," now they can find an entire community of inspiration on social media. "Clients can look at their friends' images and say, 'Oh, I want this,'" she explains. "Now, there's definitely more of the flower crowns and the flowing dresses."

A cursory search via hashtags like #maternityphotography, #boudoirmaternityphotos, #milkbathphotography, reveals a sisterhood of partially clothed, pregnant and empowered women. The aesthetic varies — from provocative bedroom shots of women in black lace lingerie, to dreamy takes of women clad in tulle gowns, smooth baby bump just protruding above the surface of a milky, flower-strewn bath — but the overarching theme is the same: pride in the female form and in motherhood.

Burke, who photographs in all of the above styles, says for many of her clients, the shoots

Crystal Streets styled her shoot with gold henna. INSTAGRAM/@ TATIANA_TEO_PHOTOGRAPHY

Maternity photography shot in a milk bath strewn with flowers is a popular technique you'll see all over Instagram and Pinterest. TIFFANY BUKRE PHOTOGRAPHY

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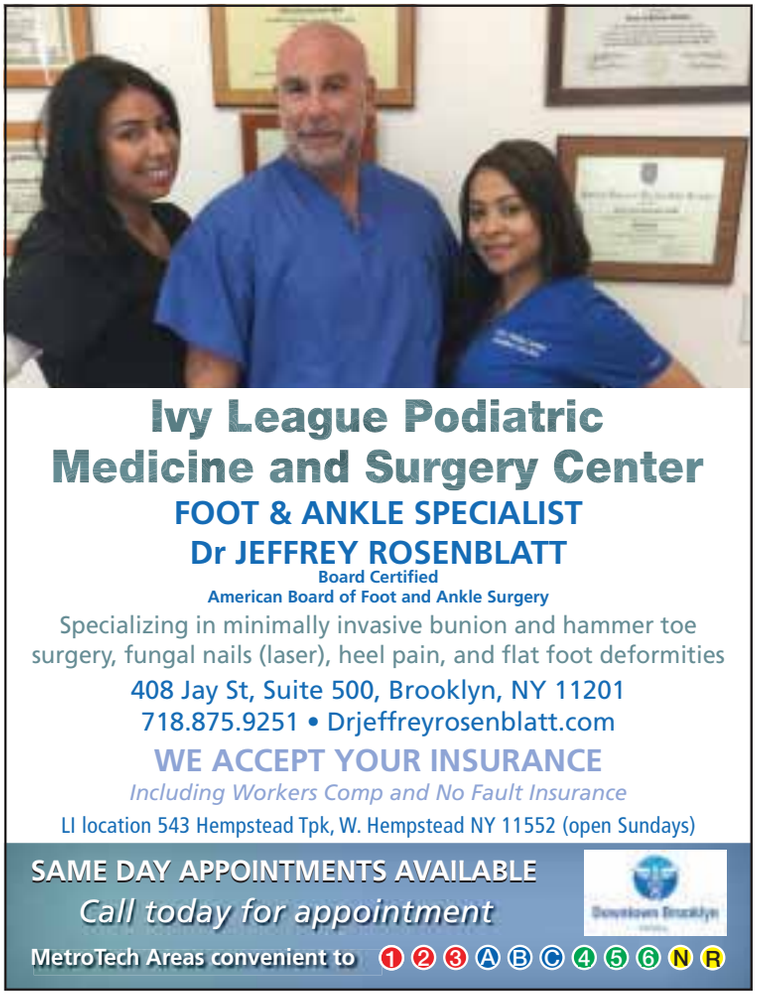
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help them overcome body-image issues.

"When we're pregnant, oftentimes we are critical and cynical, 'Oh, I've gotten so fat here; oh, my body is changing there,'" says Burke, who at the time of this interview was eight months pregnant herself. "It's a time to stop and say, 'Hold on, your body is making a human. This is a really beautiful experience, and let's celebrate it."

That's certainly what motivated Arielle Haspel. The 33-year-old founder of Be Well With Arielle says she decided to do a maternity shoot to both celebrate and remember her pregnancy. "It wasn't easy for me to get pregnant, so when I did, I was grateful for it all. The morning sickness, my growing belly and my changing body," she says.

After a friend posted a photo of her shoot with Manhattan-based photographer Rob Fitch, Haspel knew she wanted to have the same experience. Once she hit 37 weeks, she booked a session. "If I didn't capture the beauty of the pregnancy, I knew I would regret it," she says.

Fitch, who describes his aesthetic as "artistic-silhouette maternity photography," uses studio lighting to create a classic look. This results in angelic, understated shots that highlight the femininity of the pregnant form while preserving a hint of modesty.

Arielle Haspel, pictured, scheduled a maternity photo shoot both to celebrate and remember her pregnancy.
ROB FITCH PHOTOGRAPHY

When Crystal Streets, the owner of Crystal Streets Jewelry and a former celebrity fashion stylist (clients included Rihanna, Jay-Z, Mariah Carey) hit around 37 weeks, she decided to style her own maternity photo shoot with photographer Tatiana Teo. Streets poses in a sequined kimono revealing her baby bump, which she adorned with gold henna and a double-beaded belly chain from her own collection. "I have a daughter who's 8, and I didn't get a chance to do a shoot when I was pregnant with her," Streets explains. "This time around I just really wanted to stay present and enjoy my pregnancy."

While the New York City designer wanted to be sure the photos included her jewelry and "had my own stamp on it," she says she mostly set out to capture the natural glow of her pregnancy. "It's great to see that pregnant women are being embraced in a different way," she says. "We finally have the opportunity to do what we want to do and express ourselves in any way we want."

No matter what style you go for, practically speaking, if you want to capture your pregnant belly, you're going to have to lose a layer. As Burke puts it, "It's hard to see that in clothes."

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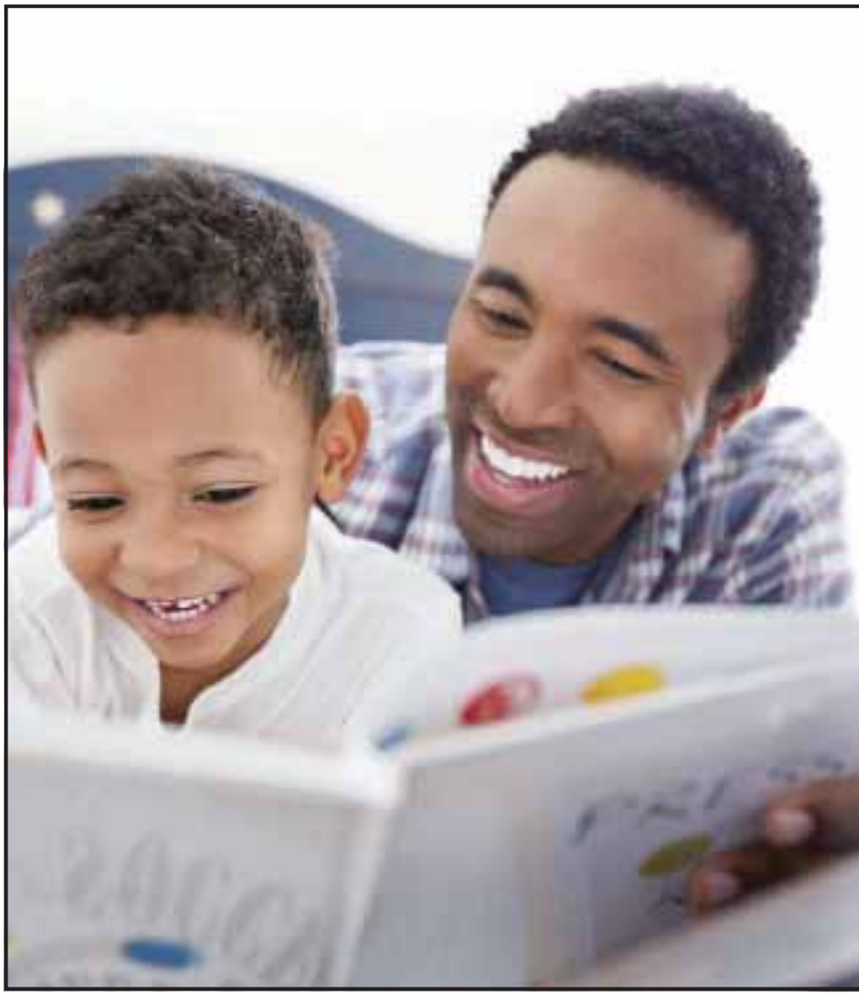

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The Gilded Lady lived in Rome-controlled Egypt about 3,000 years ago. Through biological and technological advances, anthropologists were able to create a lifelike bust, on display with her unopened sarcophagus. ELISABETH DAYNÈS; JOHN WEINSTEIN

Get personal with mummies

The American Museum of Natural History's new exhibit takes visitors inside 18 mummies — without unwrapping them.

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Ancient mummies that haven't been seen in over a century are now on display — and for the first time, you can see inside them.

One of the largest mummy-centric displays in North America, "Mummies" at the American Museum of Natural History is made up of 18 bodies from Egypt and Peru, which was actually the first country with a culture that preserved its dead.

The recent history of mummies has been rough, says co-curator David Hurst Thomas. Many of the mummies haven't been seen since the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, and have gone from sideshow curiosities to the "terrorists of the film world." "Mummies" is about reminding us these were once real people.

"We don't let very many kids see dead bodies anymore, and not many kids have watched a birth," he says. "This is a family show, but it presents ancestors in a different way."

To help visitors connect with these mummies, some of them buried more than 5,000 years ago, the museum used a slew of new technologies. DNA testing, 3D scanning and molecular analysis have helped scientists look inside the mummies without unwrapping them and create 3-D images that can be explored on interactive digital tables throughout the exhibit.

"Mummies" includes the actual relics, too. C. CHESEK, AMNH

Canopic jars

It also helped a wax sculptor create eerily lifelike replicas of two of the exhibit's tenants, the Gilded Lady, who lived in Egypt during the time of Roman conquest, and a teenager mysteriously interred in a coffin two centuries older than him. Some items they were buried with have been scanned and replicated using a 3D printer and can be handled by visitors.

"Not only do we have the reality of real mummies, but we have a new virtual science reality that lets us open these mummy bundles and see what's inside," says Thomas.

While the ornate sarcophagus and labyrinthine pyramids of the Egyptians are on grand display here, it's the Peruvian rituals that will really raise some eyebrows. The mummification process of the Peruvians went far beyond mere organ removal. About 5,000 years ago, the Chinchorros removed all of the flesh and innards, then put the skeleton back together with reeds and clay and reattached the skin.

Mummification was often done by families of the deceased. The body embalmed and wrapped in a simple cloth — making it light and portable enough to be brought out from its grave for special occasions and festival.

If you go

"Mummies"
March 20-Jan. 7, 2018
American Museum of Natural History, 79th Street and Central Park West
$12.50-$22, amnh.org

Alas, mummification fell out of favor around millennia ago. Though dozens of societies practiced it in South America alone, there are no known cultures still practicing it today.

But if you have your heart set on an alternative interrment service though, a company called Summus in Utah will mummify and entomb you in a sarcophagus and pyramid of your own design for $75,000 — $4,000 for the doggie best friend you want with you in the afterlife.

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Mansplaining of Joan

Jo Lampert shines as the title character, even if the production doesn't do her justice. JOAN MARCUS

The Public Theater's new rock musical, "Joan of Arc," doesn't let the French heroine tell her own story.

T. MICHELLE MURPHY
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"Joan of Arc: Into the Fire" should have been the mainstream feminist rock musical we need now. Unfortunately, what's onstage at the Public Theater so painfully fails the Bechdel Test, it lacks even one female point of view.

As Joan (Jo Lampert, a siren who should be on your radar in the future) takes us through her controversial travails — from peasant to soldier, from crowning a king to burning at the stake — she offers shockingly little perspective on any of it. Oh, we know she thinks she's obeying God. But when it comes to how she actually feels, and the ensuing contradictions that might ring true for today's viewer, the fact that this is a woman's story is nothing but a smokescreen.

On the other hand, there's no shortage of male perspective. The most contemplative solo is "My Life and This Girl," where Bishop Cauchon (a standout Sean Allan Krill) outlines the conflict between his duties to the church, to his prisoner, to himself and to the people of France. That's the kind of meaty soul-searching we could stand to see from the girl who is so convinced of her heaven-sent destiny that she gives up her own flesh. Not just on the pyre, but also (twice) to overwrought "purity tests" performed by various men in doubt of her maidenhood.

Yes, you're reading that correctly: Twice, Examiners are sent to inspect if Joan is "a boy, a girl, a virgin or a whore." Not even for the audience's sake is there a nod to the fact that people can be more than male or female, more than a virgin or whore, both a whore and worthy, or — perhaps the greatest miracle of all — both a woman who has ridden across France on horseback and one with a fully intact hymen.

There are a few pluses. Though it can't always commit to its rock-concert pastiche, the staging has many breathtaking tableaus with visionary director Alex Timbers' signature dashed straight across the most striking moments. Save a few distracting hand-helds, the lighting is gorgeous. The score (performed by musicians onstage) is encouraging, when the simplistic lyrics aren't getting in its way. The "hands-down" best number is the torture song, and if the whole play lived up to it, from tune to tone, there's little doubt this musical would be a hit on Broadway by 2018.

But it doesn't. "Joan of Arc" is caught in a purgatory of its own devices.

If you go

"Joan of Arc: Into the Fire"
March 15-April 30
Public Theater
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The price of applying to college

Forget tuition — the application process itself can add up.

VICTORIA SIMONS & ANNA HELHOSKI
letters@metro.us

NerdWallet is a personal finance website.

College-attendance costs get all the attention, but you'll start paying for school when you begin the application process. Factoring in the costs of test preparation, test taking and applications, expect to spend somewhere in the hundreds before you've even received acceptance letters.

Application fees

When asked how many applications students should submit, "It depends" is the answer college-admissions experts give most. They mean you should apply to a mix of safety and reach schools, as well as "match" schools that are likely to be good fits — between five and 12 schools total.

If you're worried about affording tuition, you might benefit from applying to more schools, says Mandee Heller Adler, founder of International College Counselors, a college-advising company in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. You'll pay more in application expenses, but if you're looking for scholarships, the more opportunities, the better.

"My merit-scholarship students apply to more schools than other students," Heller Adler says. "You can't be 100 percent sure how much a merit scholarship might be, so while I usually recommend seven schools to students, merit scholarship students should apply to closer to 10 schools."

Prices to keep in mind

$50 — The most common college application fee
8 — The number of applications experts often recommend
$45 — Cost of 1 SAT exam (without essay component)
$42.50 — Cost of 1 ACT exam (without essay component)

Taking the test

Choosing to take the ACT, the SAT or both isn't a matter of cost: The two tests are widely accepted and similarly priced. Experts say you should take both and report the results of your highest-scoring exam.

"If you do have a test you score better on, then we say, repeat your stronger test," says Beth DeBeer, high school guidance counselor at John Jay High School in Cross River, New York.

The price of each test includes the option to send your scores to up to four schools. Additional score reports cost $12 each for either test. If you apply to eight schools, you'll likely need four additional score reports, costing a total of $48.

Preparing for the test

To prepare for the SAT or the ACT, some students use books or online practice tests — others hire private tutors. Online test-prep courses are a good middle ground for many. College preparation stalwarts Princeton Review and Kaplan each charge $299 for a self-guided SAT online test-prep course.

Ways to save

If your family can't afford application costs, there are other ways to save. First, ask prospective schools about fee waivers. Schools typically require only that a high school guidance counselor confirm you qualify. You might if you benefit from free or reduced-cost lunch programs.

"I haven't run into any institutions where an applicant says an application fee is a barrier to apply and have not been granted a fee waiver," says Strickler, adding that among Connecticut College's nearly 6,000 applicants last year, one-quarter were granted a fee waiver.

The SAT and ACT also offer fee waivers, and there are less expensive ways to prepare for standardized tests, including borrowing materials from your high school or local library. Some colleges today don't require a standardized test at all.

Next steps

Once you've been accepted and chosen a college, turn your attention to financial aid. Exhaust your federal options first, including federal student loans, scholarships and grants. Private student loans generally carry higher interest rates, but can help you cover additional expenses if necessary.

A strong professional website is great way to stand out from the crowd. ISTOCK

How to build a professional website

It's all about simplicity.

SARA FEINSTEIN
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Whether you're a small business looking to branch out or someone looking to change career paths or strengthen their personal brand, having a professional website is a great way to scale your efforts.

But it's something that people don't always recognize or take advantage of says, Adam Wozney, the community manager at Wix, a company that provides free online website-building templates.

"Having a website is the perfect way to differentiate yourself from your competition," he explains. "It's something that can really showcase who you are in a unique way and it's 100 percent customizable."

Wozney gave us some tips for creating a successful professional website:

Identify one clear goal

Before you even begin to tackle the design, the first thing you should do is make a list of all the possible goals you have for your website —whether it's getting people to follow you on social media, subscribe to your blog or YouTube channel or maybe even purchase a product— and then narrow it down to one main goal, says Wozney.

He gives the example of Google's landing page: "Google has been around for 17-plus years, and has their home page really changed in that time? No. Because they have one singular goal — they want people to search for things." Plus, "with so much online, it very easy to get lost in the shuffle," he explains.

Keep the design simple

When it comes to creating a strong website, simplicity is key, says Wozney. That means using a maximum of four colors and three fonts. "Anything more just feels cluttered and it becomes visually difficult to read," he explains.

Overall, when plugging in content, you should be thinking of your website as a newspaper, he adds: "You have the headline, subheadline, the text — and that's it."

SEO optimize

Making sure that your website is search engine optimized is the best way to drive traffic to your page, says Wozney. The easier it is for search engines to read your content, the more likely it is that you'll show up in organic results, which is why it's important to keep your copy simple. "When it comes to content, you should make sure you're writing it for an eighth-grade audience," he explains. You should also be including keywords throughout. "Say you're a coffee shop in Brooklyn, you might say: We have the best coffee in Brooklyn," he continues. "Just make sure keywords don't exceed more than four to 5 percent of your copy."

Update content

It's important to keep a regular pulse on your website and update your content once in awhile, Wozney explains. If you're photographer who has 300 new pictures to upload, rather than putting them all up at once, he suggests uploading 50 when your website launches, and then setting up a schedule where you post a couple of new pictures once or twice a week. "Keeping active on your website through uploading pictures or copy is a great way to let search engines know, 'Hey, I'm alive, and I'm posting things that are relevant to the people searching for exactly what I'm talking about," explains Wozney, "and that's just another factor that goes into getting found online."

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How marijuana could save football

Marijuana remains one of the eight drugs banned by the NFL.

MATTHEW BURKE
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Fans can smoke marijuana in Denver before Broncos games, but players can't. GETTY IMAGES

America's longtime drug of choice could very well end up saving America's longtime sport of choice.

The sport of football must find a solution (or solutions) to its concussion problem or risk becoming what boxing and horse racing are today — largely irrelevant despite a decades-long boom period in the United States.

More and more reports are saying that marijuana can — in a healthy way — help alleviate the pain that so many current and former football players experience. Not only can it help take away the pain from the daily nicks, bruises and bumps that players suffer from an opposing player's helmet off the shin or a face mask in the forearm, it is also becoming increasingly clear that it can help treat CTE, a progressive degenerative disease in the brain caused by trauma.

Cannabidiol, one of over 100 chemical compounds founds in cannabis, is said to help stabilize the brain after injury.

"There may only be a few brain cells that are injured to the point of no return [during trauma]," Michael Hoffer, professor of otolaryngology at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, told The Atlantic in December. "There are a lot of brain cells at risk right around those cells. If we can stabilize those we can prevent the dominos from falling."

Pills vs. pot

Former Arizona Cardinals and Denver Broncos quarterback Jake Plummer has been at the forefront of a campaign called When the Bright Lights Fade, which is raising money for studies exploring how the use of cannabidiol can help treat and prevent the onset of symptoms associated with CTE.

"I'd say 80-90 percent of NFL players are on some kind of drug to get them through the pain and the stress and the anxiety of playing a full football season," Plummer told Metro. "And when these players are done playing, I'd say 80-90 percent of them continue on high priced meds for most of the rest of their lives. Whether it's cannabis or Percocets or whatever — there's a lot of drugs in the league."

Plummer is convinced that marijuana is infinitely more safe than the other pain relievers that players use.

"It's the healthiest option … that's what we'd like people to understand," he said. "I know numerous guys who have smoked their whole career, and even some that fall into that 10-20 percent of guys that don't take any drugs — except for cannabis.

"I think there's more and more proof coming out that it's a definite benefit. It's obviously helping these players get through the season. When you put your body through that much pain and endure so many bumps and bruises you should be allowed to use a healthy, safe, nonaddictive, nontoxic form of medicine, if you so choose."

Stoner stigma

Marijuana remains one of the eight drugs banned by the NFL and has led to fines and suspensions for many of its players. Plummer claims that the NFL knows that marijuana is a healthier alternative to many prescription pain drugs, but that the league doesn't want to take a PR hit for easing up on weed.

"We're fighting a stigma [about marijuana] that started back in the 1930s," Plummer said. "The NFL wants their players to be role models. They want their players to be what kids strive to be. So when you come out and say these players are using cannabis, they're afraid that that'll send the wrong message to these young kids that, 'cannabis is good, you should use it. You should use it no matter what.' But that's not what we're doing. We're talking about grown adults that should have a choice in medicine, being allowed the freedom to choose it without punishment.

"There's a hang-up with the NFL with their image, I believe, and they're worried that they'll be sending the wrong message to the youth that they're continuously trying to keep interested in the game of football."

Islanders looking to slow down recent setbacks as stretch run arrives

The Islanders need to fix things fast if they want to save their season. GETTY IMAGES

Doug Weight spoke calmly, but there was no mistaking his anger.

It was a few minutes after the Islanders' 3-2 overtime loss to the Columbus Blue Jackets at Barclays Center Saturday afternoon, and Weight left no doubt how he felt about his team's performance.

"We just weren't good," Weight said. "I just didn't recognize our team."

However, the Islanders left with one point — a fact which grew in significance after Toronto lost in overtime to Chicago and Tampa Bay dropped a regulation decision to Washington. The Leafs lead the Islanders by one point for the second Eastern Conference wildcard berth; Tampa Bay is one point behind the Islanders and two behind Toronto. This did little to assuage Weight.

"Probably the worst two periods I've seen in a year and a half," Weight said. "I'm not giving it much praise."

Indeed, there wasn't much to praise. The Islanders were outshot 38-22 — although they held a 56-54 advantage in total shot attempts — including 29-13 after the first two periods.

"You never want to spend a lot of time in your [defensive] zone," Dennis Seidenberg said. "If we play our game it should be the other way around, us playing in the offensive zone and controlling the game."

The loss to Columbus culminated a week in which the Islanders lost four of five to St. Louis, Carolina, Winnipeg and the Blue Jackets.

And now comes the heavy lifting.

Starting Wednesday night at the Garden, the Islanders will finish the March portion of their schedule against the Rangers, at Pittsburgh, home against Boston, home against Nashville, at Philadelphia and home against the Devils.

Theoretically, the Islanders could enter April still alive for the franchise's fourth playoff berth in five years or could be wrapping up what would be viewed as a most disappointing season.

"If it was black-and-white it would [have been] fixed three games ago," Weight said. "There's a million excuses that come into play; that you don't know whether to overreact or not.

DENIS GORMAN

Mets, Yankees spring notebook: Bombers toss no-no, youth shines bright

An update from Florida as the regular season approaches.

ROBERT CRISCOLA
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Sure it was a meaningless game, but it was still a no-hitter. GETTY IMAGES

Yankees toss rare spring training no-hitter

Masahiro Tanaka and nonroster lefty Jordan Montgomery combined to hold the Tigers hitless in a 3-0 victory on Friday afternoon. Joe Girardi was excited with the result, but put it in perspective.

"It's fun," Girardi told reporters. "Obviously it means more if it's the regular season but still it's a no-hitter."

Surprisingly, Tanaka wasn't entirely pleased with his performance in which he struck out six batters through 4.1 innings.

"I felt that I wasn't at my best, but I still was able to put up some zeroes so that part satisfied me," he said through a translator. "With the slider and the cut fastball, the location of it, I felt like I was all over the place. The command of those can be better."

Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said his team did not lie down toward the end just because it was an exhibition.

"There was pride involved," he told reporters. "You don't want to get no hit whether it's Spring Training or regular season or whiffleball in the backyard."

Kaprielian dazzles before demotion

James Kaprielian, the 16th overall pick from the 2015 draft, faced the minimum in a two-inning appearance on Thursday before learning he would be demoted he next day. Kaprielian says he knew he wasn't going to make the team out of camp, but that wasn't going to stop him from giving it his all this spring. His goal remains to make the major-league roster this year.

"I think I can help this team," he told reporters. "Obviously, I need to stay healthy, but at the end of the day, regardless of where I am, I need to be able to pitch and throw strikes and give my team an opportunity to win."

Kaprielian suffered from an elbow issue last fall, raising red flags within the Yankees' organization, but he has seemingly recovered. He's likely to start the year in High-A Tampa.

Conforto the center of attention

Michael Conforto isn't just excelling at the plate this spring. Playing center field for the third time this month, he made a brilliant throw to nail a runner at third base on Thursday.

"[Conforto] is trying to show people that he can play anywhere, and I thought he's handled himself very well out there," Collins told reporters after the game. "He's gotten some very good jumps on balls."

Conforto is batting .357 in Grapefruit League play with two homers and four RBIs.

Rowen, Edgin in the pen?

The Mets' bullpen situation is getting cloudier by the day, and Ben Rowen and Josh Edgin are making their cases to be included on the Opening Day roster. Rowen, a submarine-style righty, has a 1.93 ERA through 9.1 innings. Collins noted that Edgin has gained better command of his slider since camp began.

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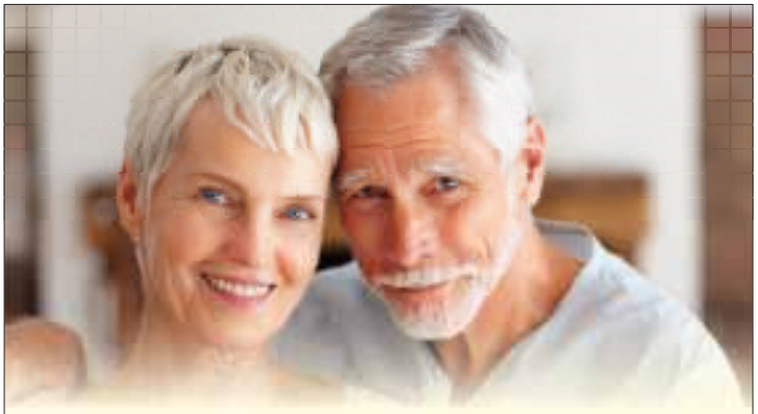

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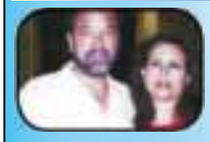

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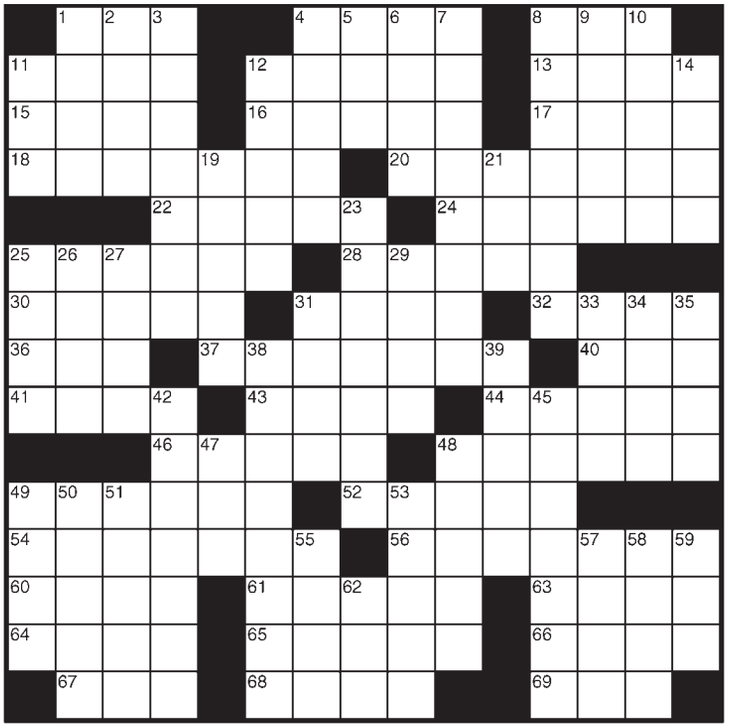
59 Campground initials
62 Time span



metro.us/sudoku

easy

	4			5		1		
	3					8	6	
2	7		1			9		
					8		7	9
		7	4		1	6		
6	2		9					
		4			7		9	6
	9	5					3	
		2		4			5	

hard

		4		9	1	6	7	
	6			4	8			
					2	4		8
	4					8		
9			2		4			7
		7					2	
4		1	3					
			4	1			6	
	3	5	8	2		1		

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Take hold of whatever situation you face. Engage in talks that will bring about change. Push back if someone tries to pressure you. Control excessive spending.

Taurus Use caution when dealing with superiors, and double-check others' credentials as well as your documentation before you engage in talks that could affect your status.

Gemini Give your best and don't take any guff from pushy people. Stay focused on yourself and try to devise innovative ways to make personal and financial improvements.

Cancer Tread carefully when dealing with people you work or do business with. Use your imagination and intuition to counter whatever is thrown your way. Pace yourself.

Leo Make changes for the right reasons. Focus on gathering information and gaining experience. Home and personal improvements will lead to greater opportunities.

Virgo A proactive approach to whatever you want to accomplish is encouraged. Don't get hung up on trivial matters. Stay focused on what's important to you.

Libra The pendulum will swing when it comes to emotions and personal relationships. Don't overreact or get into a tiff with someone over an inconsequential matter.

Scorpio Don't let the little things get to you. You won't make headway if you let your temper get the better of you. Look for a way to use your energy constructively.

Sagittarius An unexpected opportunity will give you the boost you need to get back on track. Using your skills in a unique way will bring surprising results.

Capricorn Dig deep and get the lowdown on anything that may affect your reputation or progress. Don't let temptation lead to an unfortunate mistake.

Aquarius Set the stage for advancement. Trust in your judgment and make decisions based on your needs. If you reconnect with past colleagues, an opportunity will develop.

Pisces Keep your personal life simple in order to live up to your full professional and personal potential. Take responsibility and do your best. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

E	L	M	S		V	E	R	S	A		A	M	P	S
W	A	I	T		O	M	I	T	S		L	I	E	U
E	V	E	R		C	U	B	E	S		A	N	O	N
S	E	N	O	R	A	S		L	E	A	S	I	N	G
			L	I	T		G	E	N	T				
	C	A	L	C	I	T	E		T	E	A	S	E	D
N	I	X		H	O	A	R	D		N	I	C	E	R
E	R	I	E		N	O	M	A	D		D	I	R	E
A	C	O	R	N		S	A	T	E	S		F	I	G
R	A	M	R	O	D		N	E	C	K	T	I	E	
				R	E	P	S		L	I	I			
V	I	B	R	A	T	E		V	A	M	P	I	R	E
O	S	L	O		A	R	D	O	R		T	O	U	T
L	A	U	D		C	R	A	T	E		O	U	S	T
E	K	E	S		H	Y	P	E	R		E	S	T	A

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